

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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NSAE-00 RSC-01 SP-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 PRS-01 DRC-01 /048 W

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R 091801Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9001

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 11319

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, FR, UR

SUBJECT: FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY IRRITATION OVER SOVIET

AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON GISCARD

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO CALLED ON FINANCE
MINISTER AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE GISCARD D'ESTAING MAY

7. SUBJECT OF VISIT WAS ANNOUNCED AS ECONOMIC RELATIONS,
IN PARTICULAR THE JOINT FRANCO-SOVIET GRANDE COMMISSION.
VISIT INITIALLY RECEIVED A MODERATE AMOUNT OF COVERAGE,
INCLUDING PHOTOS, IN MAY 8 PRESS. FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY
(PCF) POLITICAL BUREAU ISSUED STATEMENT MAY 8 CRITI-

CIZING THIS CALL. AFTER PRAISING STATE OF FRANCO-
SOVIET RELATIONS, STATEMENT WENT ON: "IT IS NEVERTHELESS
TRUE THAT M. GISCARD D'ESTAING BEING ONE OF THE TWO
CANDIDATES IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, THE DEMARCHE OF
THE AMBASSADOR OF THE USSR IN FRANCE IS INOPPORTUNE. IT
IS ALL THE MORE REGRETTABLE THAT IT OFFERS A PRETEXT FOR
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POLITICAL SPECULATIONS PRESENTING THIS DEMARCHE AS A

DECISION FAVORABLE TO THE CANDIDATE OF THE RIGHT."

2. COMMENT. THIS IS THE SECOND TIME THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. SHORTLY AFTER THE CAMPAIGN BEGAN, AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO INVITED THE SOCIALIST CANDIDATE MITTERRAND TO LUNCH. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON GISCARD WILL HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE ELECTION RESULTS. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT PCF CHOSE TO CRITICIZE THIS SOVIET ACTION, SINCE IT IS UNUSUAL FOR THE PCF TO CRITICIZE THE SOVIET UNION. THE PCF MIGHT, HOWEVER, HAVE DECIDED TO ISSUE A PUBLIC STATEMENT IN AN EFFORT TO SHOW ITS INDEPENDENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND TO DEMONSTRATE ITS OPPOSITION TO ANY MEDDLING BY THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN FRENCH DOMESTIC POLITICS. WHILE SOVIET DEMARCHE MAY HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF SIMPLE DIPLOMATIC MALADROITNESS, WE WONDER IF IN FACT IT WAS NOT INTENDED AS AN OPEN INDICATION OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH FRANCE IF GISCARD WERE ELECTED. IT IS NOW AN OPEN SECRET IN PARIS THAT THE SOVIET EMBASSY HAD TAKEN A POSITION IN FAVOR OF CHABAN BEFORE THE FIRST ROUND. WE DO NOT FIND IT UNLIKELY THAT SOVIETS, HAVING DECIDED THAT THEIR STATE INTERESTS MAY BE BETTER SERVED BY GISCARD'S ELECTION THAN BY THAT OF MITTERRAND, ARE NOW MAKING THIS DECISION KNOWN, PUBLICLY. WE HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN TOLD BY SOVIET COUNSELOR THAT AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES, BEFORE THE FIRST ROUND OF THE ELECTIONS, FROM ALL THREE MAJOR CANDIDATES THAT THE CONTENT AND TONE OF FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS OF THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS WOULD BE PRESERVED. CHERVONENKO'S VISIT IS IN GISCARD'S INTERESTS AS WELL. HE IS SEEN PUBLICLY TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN GOOD FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD HOWEVER BY AN EXTREMELY WELL-INFORMED SOURCE THAT GISCARD, ONCE ELECTED PRESIDENT, WOULD MOVE QUIETLY BUT QUICKLY AND FIRMLY TO REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN PARIS WHICH HE JUDGES TO BE EXCESSIVE.

IRWIN

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